





*Hannah Miles*



Thomas Miller



# Our Children's God:

A BOOK OF STORIES

FOR THE YOUNG.

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BY MRS. E. M. BRUCE.

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## P R E F A C E .



THIS little book is written for you, dear children, in the hope that it may help you to know God better, and love Him more.

He who gave you all that you have, and made you all that you are, asks you to love and obey Him in return for all His kindness.

As you read, and learn how he has watched over and kept other children no older than yourselves, may you be led to love and trust him, too, is the sincere wish of your friend

THE AUTHOR.

THE STATE

The State of New York, in and for the County of Albany, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears on file in the office of the Secretary of State.

Witness my hand and the seal of the said State at Albany, this 1st day of January, 1880.

John T. Hoffman, Secretary of State.



## GOD THE FATHER.



“ How many Gods are there, father ? ”

“ Three, my child. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.”

“ I don't see how that can be. Didn't you tell me the other day that God was the Creator of all things ? ”

“ Yes, I told you so.”

“ Well, I don't see how three Gods could have been all Creators of the world.”

Before Mr. Brown had time to answer this troublesome suggestion, a customer called, and he was obliged to leave his little son to work out this difficult problem in his own mind.

This he was not long in doing. He said to himself—

Now, if father and brother John and I were all to try doing the same thing, there would have to be one way ar-

ranged to do it, and we should all have to work after the direction of one will, else we should make strange confusion of it. We couldn't all be fathers, and all command; for there would be nobody left to obey.

Not long after this, an opportunity came for trying his new theory. One evening, in the same week in which this conversation took place, as Mr. Brown was about leaving his place of business, there was a man came into his store, having for sale a very curious little globe, representing the earth. It

was so arranged that it could all be taken to pieces, and make a fine puzzle for any one to put it together again. It was intended to teach children geography ; and a very wise head it must have been that would have been able to put it together, getting each sea, country and minute division in its proper place, without making any mistake.

Mr. Brown was very much pleased with it, and thinking that it would be a help, as well as a pleasure to his family, he bought one and carried it home

with him. He did not show it to his children as soon as he got home; for tea was on the table, and he knew that it would attract the attention of the little ones, so that they could not leave it to eat. So he laid it under his shawl on the hall table, and sat down to supper with the family. When they were nearly through eating, he said —

“I don't think you can any of you guess what I brought home for our amusement this evening.”

John guessed it was a ball; but Jane said —

“ No, that couldn't be, for they could not go out of doors to play ball in the evening.” She suggested that it might be the battle-door and shuttle-cock for which she had been teasing so long; but Peter said —

“ No, it couldn't be that; for but one could be amused by that, and father said he brought this to amuse us all.”

All guessed round, but none were

able to hit upon the right, and at length Mr. Brown gratified their curiosity by telling them that it was a world he had brought. Oh, how they all wondered, and especially when he unrolled the paper, and displayed the broken pieces; they thought these fragments looked like most anything else, more than like a world.

But Mr. Brown explained to them what the pieces meant; and the boys were greatly delighted with the thought of putting them together.

The girls were not included in the anticipated pleasure, as they were not old enough to have studied geography.

They were to look on, and see their father and the boys put the globe together.

All gathered round the table and made ready to begin.

Mr. Brown took up first the Atlantic ocean, and said, "We will take this for a beginning."

"No," said John; "I think that we had better begin with the Pacific, because that is the largest."



Peter thought they had better take the Arctic first, because that was farthest north, and seemed like the beginning of the world.

Thus, with each a different opinion, they disputed for a long time without being able to come to any agreement.

At length Peter said —

“I don't see that we get along much this way. Hadn't we better give way to father, as he is the oldest, and let him say where we shall begin?”

This was agreed to by John, and

Mr. Brown placed the Atlantic ocean in its proper position.

“Now,” said John, “we will put Australia in its place at the southern part of this ocean.”

“I don't think it belongs there,” said Mr. Brown.

“Nor I,” says Peter.

Another long dispute takes place now about this island, and they did not seem likely to come very soon to the end of it.

Again, Peter, who was always the

philosopher to see through difficult places, made a suggestion.

“I don’t see any other way,” says he, for us, if we are all going to be master workmen, but to take turns in the order of our ages.”

“I will consent to this,” said his father; “and I,” said John; and now they thought the matter was all settled. It was John’s turn to decide where Australia should go. He said he would have it in the Atlantic ocean; and a long time was spent in trying to find a place for it there. This, of course,

was to no purpose ; and John finally consented to let it lie on the table a while, till they could find a place for it. Then they tried to make up the Western continent, but with no better success than they before had.

At length Peter sprang up from the table, exclaiming — “ It is no use ; we can't all be commanders. Father could soon put that together himself, or soon help us to do it, if we would obey him ; but, at this kind of work we can never do it. Now, father, this has set me to thinking. I can't believe there was

more than one God that created the world. How can three Gods be one, all of them commanding, yet all obeying? And, how could the earth and sky, and all that is in them, ever have been made except by one great and good Father?"

Mr. Brown was for a long time silent. He had no answer to give to this question. At length he said, slowly —

“That is a mystery, and you ought not to think about it.”

But Peter was not one of the kind to go through life without thinking.

He thought on, and tried in every possible way to find an answer to his question. He found it at last in the Bible. He was reading one morning the 2d chapter of 1st Timothy, and at the 5th verse was the direct answer to the question which had so long bothered him. It read thus: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus."

Peter read it again and again; and, as he read, he believed. Never more did he doubt or feel troubled by the question, Who created the world?

GOD A FATHER AND FRIEND  
ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

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“Anna, I want to ask you a question.”

“Well, dear, what is it? I will answer any question that I can.”

“Does God really love us as much as Mr. James said yesterday?”

“Yes, Nellie, a great deal more than Mr. James said. A great deal more

than any body ever said. We can *never* tell how much."

"Well, Anna, there is another question. *Do you, can you* trust God's love as much as you do the love of your earthly friends?"

"Oh yes, dear, much, very much more. My earthly friends may die, or leave me; God never can. I never feel afraid to trust Him, and it makes me so happy to know that I have one friend who cannot change."

"I wish I could feel so. Are you sure that God's love would be with you



if you were really in need? Did you ever know any body to get help from God when there was no body on earth to help them?"

"Yes, many times. I will tell you of one little girl no older than yourself that believed so firmly in God's love that she was willing to trust it before every thing else."

"Do tell me, Anna, for I want to learn to trust Him. I know I should be happier than I am now."

The story is of little "Katie Gray." She was brought up by parents who

knew little of God ; indeed her father did not believe in God at all. He was a very good man in all other regards, he loved his little daughter dearly, and had done every thing to make her life happy, except the one greatest and best thing, teaching her to love and trust her Father in Heaven. The Bible was never read in the family. They never spoke of the life beyond the present, and often when her little heart yearned to know about the future ; she would be sent away with the rebuke of her father, for asking ques-

tions which he had so often forbidden her to ask.

The family never went to church, and of course poor little Katie lost all those opportunities to hear about God, and his goodness. So she lived on, until she was twelve years old with all her heart yearnings unsatisfied. It happened that her Aunt (who was a truly pious woman) came to visit the family, the Winter that Nellie was twelve years old, She and Nellie occupied the same chamber, and the Aunt, as was her habit, read a chapter

in the Bible every night before she went to bed. The first night, she asked Nellie if she should read aloud, and Nellie very joyfully said yes. She was very fond of books, and had been allowed to read a great deal, no book being denied her except the Bible. She had always been very curious about this wonderful book, and now that her Aunt proposed to read it for her, she accepted gladly, feeling that it would not be disobeying her father's commands, if she only listened to an-

other's reading, without touching the book herself.

It chanced that her Aunt opened, the first evening, to the 45th chapter of Isaiah, and read it aloud.

Katie listened with the most eager attention. With what a new life did its words inspire her. Though she had never heard of God before, it seemed as if, in a few moments, her heart was made full of him.

“I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me. I from the light, and create darkness.

I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

These words her Aunt read; and it seemed as if they had been especially sent to supply her needs.

How often had she asked herself these questions.

"Who made me? How did I come on the earth? Who made the earth for me to live upon? Who made the sky over the earth? Who filled the day-sky with light, and the night-sky with darkness and the beautiful stars?"

How she had longed to know these things, and now, as by magic, the curtain had been lifted, and she saw them all.

“Oh, Aunty,” she cried, “tell me more of God.” Long and earnestly they talked that night. The child’s heart was led on with its trusting confidence until it had unburdened all its past doubt and unhappiness.

Aunt Lucy was well calculated to meet the wants of such a case, and before the day dawned, the little girl had learned much about God, and

Christ, and the great plan of salvation. She had been much attracted by the twenty-second verse of the chapter, which says :

“ Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else,” and she made many inquiries as to how she could enter upon this salvation. Her Aunt showed her how Christ had lived to show us the way, and told her in what part of the Bible she might learn of him. Then she taught her how to pray, and it seemed as if a



new life opened upon Katie in that single night.

From that time she loved God and Christ, believed in them truly, and tried to do things to render her a worthy child of the Father in heaven, and follower of the dear Saviour, who had died for her. Her Aunt's visit was soon over, and she left the little girl again alone in her unchristian home. But before she went, she presented Katie a little pocket Bible, which she charged her to keep always with her, read often, and never forget its com-

mandments. Katie accepted the present, and heeded the advice, and so she grew happier and better every day. But this state of things could not long continue without coming to the knowledge of her parents.

She had been reading one night that beautiful twenty-seventh Psalm, and leaving her book open upon her table, had kneeled down beside her bed to pray, when suddenly her mother opened the door, and came into the room. She saw the Bible lying open, and the child kneeling by the

bed-side, and the truth all flashed upon her mind. Katie did not rise, but quietly continued her prayer. When she had finished, a long explanation followed, in which the little daughter confessing all, earnestly entreated her mother, to seek the same comfort. The mother was much excited, and spoke very harshly to her child for disobeying her commands so openly. Katie pleaded with her, but to no purpose. In this excited state of mind, she left the room, and reported the state of things to her husband.

The father was much more unreasonable than the mother had been. He declared that he would put a stop to such folly at any cost. Rushing into Katie's room, he upbraided her in most severe words and left her with a command, never to touch the Bible or utter another word of prayer.

Poor Katie was almost heart-broken. She tried to say something in self-defence, but her father would not hear one word from her. After he had gone, she gave way to her feelings, and sobbed bitterly; then she thought

of the words of a Psalm which she had lately read. "Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." When she had repeated this, she kneeled down again by her bed-side, and began again to pray.

Her father hearing her, and growing more excited by this new act of disobedience, opened her chamber door, and cried out.

"You shall stop praying, or leave

my house. No child shall stop under my roof that will not obey me."

Katie rose from her knees, and stood almost breathless with sorrow. What should she do? What could she do? Here was the home of her childhood, and here the father and mother who had always so kindly cared for her; they were her dearest, almost her only near earthly friends, and if she left them she had nowhere else to go.

She opened her window and looked out into the night. The darkness was

intense. It was a terrible night, wild and stormy; and, as she looked out, it seemed as if every thing was combined to make the thought dreadful to her of leaving a comfortable home in such an hour.

Then she remembered the sparrows that the heavenly Father feedeth, and careth for, and she said to herself He will surely not be forgetful of me, if he cares so tenderly for them. She repeated David's words, "Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night

his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

Then she made up her mind to go out into the world alone, and throwing herself entirely upon the protection of God, trust him for the result.

She gathered up a little bundle of her clothing, and putting on her bonnet and shawl, stepped very lightly down the staircase, and opened the door into the sitting-room below. She supposed that her father and mother, were, before this time, in their own room for the night; and that she



should pass out unnoticed by any human being.

She was much surprised to find both father and mother in the sitting-room, through which she must pass to reach the outer door.

Her mother burst into tears as soon as she appeared, and sobbed violently. Her father, hard and angry as he had been a few moments before, could not but be moved at the sight before him. He knew that there must be a very strong emotion in the heart of that little child, that could prompt her to leave

home and kindred, for the untried world without.

His heart was touched, and he said,  
“Where are you going, Katie?”

“I don't know, you told me that I must go away from here, or else stop praying and reading my Bible, and I could not do that, so I am going anywhere that I can love God as much as my heart wants to.”

“But who will take care of you, if you go away from us?”

“‘When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up,’”

This was too much. Even that proud father's stony heart, could not look upon such trust as that unmoved.

There was the darling of his heart, his only child, about to throw herself upon the world, without home or shelter, because that great faith in God was in her heart. The strong man was overcome, and he, too, wept.

"Come back, Katie. Come back," he said in broken accents, "You shall not lose an earthly father, because you have loved an heavenly." He clasped the little one in his arms, and they

wept together until they were fully reconciled.

From that hour, Katie's life was a happy one. She not only loved God as much as before, but into her heart crept a new cause for thanksgiving, in that her father and mother learned to love him, too. Her prayers were answered and her home became a Christian home. It was no longer simply a shelter for her body, but a real spirit home, where her soul could grow daily in its love for God and Christ, and all holy and good things.

## THE EVER-LIVING GOD.



I SAT at my window one bright Summer morning, feeling in one of my sunniest moods ; a chill came over me at sight of a long funeral procession winding slowly down the street.

The dead, was unknown to me ; the persons who followed as mourners, and those who were merely sympathisers, were alike strangers : and yet

there was something about the procession that more than usually interested me. What could it be? perhaps it was, that of the great throng of people who followed the hearse, but two seemed to be mourners—a woman, whose tall slender form was draped in deepest black;—and a little child, about three years old, who seemed not to realize the sorrow by which others were oppressed, but cheerfully looked out of the carriage, and by her smiling face seemed to say, “The world is beautiful yet, notwithstanding my mother’s sad heart.”

I learned afterward, who the group, in which I had been so much interested, were. The occupant of the hearse had been a man of distinction, a distinguished Professor in a neighboring university, whose life had been devoted to the improvement of his fellow men.

He died poor, leaving no inheritance to the world, save his memory, and the beautiful little child of which I have just spoken.

You may think this little helpless infant a poor bestowment to make up-

on the unappreciating world, but I will show you how she proved a great blessing, all weak and helpless though she was.

She had a little body, it is true; but in it, was a Spirit which had grown wonderfully during the three years of her little life upon the earth.

Her father and mother had taught her to believe in God, and put her trust in him. They had sowed precious seed in that child's heart, and already began to appear the harvest of purity and love.



At the close of the long tedious winter which followed the summer, in which the incidents of this story commenced, I chanced one day to be passing an orphan asylum, and noticed a carriage which stopped before the door, and deposited a gentleman, and a child seemingly about four years old. He ran up the steps, and delivering the child to the person who answered the bell, said with a most unconcerned air, "Child from Ward No. 4. Mother and Father both dead. Nobody to take care of her. Never will be called for."

Here, then, was the whole life history of a little one for whom the asylum was to supply, in its poor way, home, friends, and all the necessary wants of childhood. My heart was touched. I had no child of my own on whom to bestow my care, and my affections reached out involuntarily toward the little stranger.

I stepped to the door of the asylum, and as soon as the bell was answered, asked to see the child who had just been received. They brought her from an adjoining room, and I recog-

nized, instantly, the same sweet face which had smiled on me from the carriage in the funeral procession, months before. I clasped her in my arms, and unbidden tears fell on her face, as I said, "poor little orphan, who will care for you now?" A look of astonishment covered her face, as she raised her eyes to mine, and said, sweetly,

"God isn't dead."

With what a new faith those words filled my heart. They have been my guiding life-star ever since. Time cannot efface them from my memory. No

wave of sorrow can ever wash them away. But ever amid the darkness, and the storms of life, the child's trust comes back to me. I say, "God is'nt dead," and I work on, sometimes weary and faint, yet always trusting in the ever-living God."

It is but just, that I should say before I close this narration, that little Mary, the orphan, became mine by adoption, and has been transformed by time from the four years' child, to a happy wife and mother, but the undying God has kept, (through all these

changes) her heart, sweet and trusting toward Him. The belief of her childhood has been ripened by repeated instances of care, into the glorious certainty that *God never dies.*

## GOD THE BOUNTIFUL GIVER.

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“MOTHER,” said little Nellie Clifford, “I heard you saying last night, that ‘God was a very bountiful giver;’ will you tell me what you meant by that.”

“Yes, dear : I meant that he has given and continues to give us, a great many things more than we really need.”

“Give who, mother?” said Nellie, with an astonished air.

“Why, you and I, Nellie, and every body that lives on the earth.”

“I am sure I don’t have any more things than I need.”

“You are hasty in saying so, my child. You hav n’t thought of this matter before, and you don’t at this moment, remember how many, or just what gifts, God does give to you.”

“I don’t know, that I just exactly understand what you mean by need.”

“There are a good many meanings

that we might put to that word," said her mother, "but just what I meant, when I spoke, was, the things that we cannot live without."

"Well, I am sure that I don't have anything but what is really necessary."

"You are speaking in haste again, my child. I think you will not say so, after you have thought more on the subject."

"Well, mother, please tell me; what do I have that I do not need?"

"A thousand things, my child. I could not mention them all in one con-



versation ; but you will readily see if you should be confined for a single day to the bare necessaries of life."

"I will try it," said Nellie, "this very day."

"Well, to begin," said her mother, "this fine July morning, you do not need that nice pink dress that you are putting on. The day is so warm that you will be equally comfortable without your shoes and stockings.

"But I cannot go barefooted to school."

"Why not? There are pavements

all of the way to the school house, and you would not hurt your feet at all."

"I know it, but I should be laughed at, and that would make me feel bad. I cannot go without them."

"Well, put them on my child, but you see they are only for ornament to-day ; not for any need. Then the pretty pink dress, which you like so much, might, with the same reason, be replaced by that faded brown one ; but since you acknowledge that these things are luxuries, we will put them down first on the list."

Nellie being dressed by this time, they descended together to the breakfast table. The usual simple morning meal was spread, and they were just seating themselves at the table, when the door opened, and "Hal" entered, with a basket of most luscious looking strawberries."

"Oh, how nice they look ; how nice they smell, and how deliciously they will taste," said Nellie, "with our milk."

"But, my dear," said her mother, "as you are living to-day on the bare

necessaries of life, you cannot eat these unless you are willing to add them on the bill of your acknowledged luxuries."

"I shall have to," said Nellie, and with this admission, she ate her sweet strawberries and milk. When breakfast was over, Nellie took her book, and sat down at the parlor window to read. The morning was glorious, not too much sunshine, nor too much shadow, but with its glitter kindly subdued by the clouds, and they, in their turn, made golden and beautiful by

the coy sunlight, which peeped out now and then upon their veiled faces.

“Oh, how beautiful the sky is. Do come and look at it,” cried Nellie, in her joy.

“I will come,” said her mother, “but you must n’t look at it any longer, unless you are willing to set this down on your list of pleasures. You know God might just as well have made the sky one unchanging leaden hue, if he had not desired something more for us than bare existence. Nellie acknowledged the truth of this, and

sat for a long time, looking thoughtfully up into the beautiful sky. She was started from this reverie, by a ring at the door. She opened the door herself, and found there a boy with a splendid bouquet, all wet with the morning dew, which her aunt had sent her from the country. Returning with them to the parlor, she said with a subdued voice, "I have learned the lesson, Mother. I have here a new token of God's bounty. I have scarcely drawn a breath since I was so foolish as to say I had no luxuries,

but something has reminded me how bountiful God is."

"You will, all your life, learn this lesson," said her mother, "for every hour will bring you some new reminder of God's goodness."

## THE EVER-PRESENT GOD.



HE is never, *never* absent,  
From the children of his care.  
No place on the earth so lonely  
That God's spirit is not there.

MRS. ALGER was the wife of a wealthy merchant in Boston. She was surrounded by every luxury that her heart could wish, and she knew well how to appreciate and prize them all. Her



position and prosperity did not make her wicked and proud as it does some people. She loved God and tried to serve him. She loved the creatures that he has made, and tried to be kind to every-body that she knew. Of course she was happy. Now, I imagine that you, my little friends, are all wondering whether she had nothing more to make her happy than a fine house and plenty of money to spend. I am glad to be able to tell you that she had. Two dear little boys, the one seven and the other four years old, call

ed her mother, and the sound filled her heart with more happiness than any other earthly joy that she possessed. She was a good mother, one who never allowed the claims of society or the fashionable world to interfere with the tender care which she gave to her little ones. Often when their nurse was about to take them up to their beds at night, and Mrs. Alger rose to go with them, her husband would try to persuade her not to go. But she would always say pleasantly, "I'll not be gone but a few moments, and the

night will be happier to me, if I hear the little ones say their prayers before they sleep." At these times she would talk with them much about God, and so in their very early youth they learned to love and trust their "dear Father in heaven," (as they always called Him.)

It was the custom of this happy little family to spend every summer in the country. Not at Saratoga or Newport, as they cared little for the show and parade of such places, but at a quiet place in the open country, where

the sweet blue sky might smile on them all the day long, and their free hearts grow glad continually in the sunshine, their midsummer days were spent.

During one of these summer vacations, Willie and Jimmy found a pine wood near where they were boarding, that was a great attraction to them. Being permitted by their mother to play in the outskirts of the wood, they were very careful to remember the command, never to go into the wood very far.

One day, they were delighted with permission to go with a pic-nic party who were going out for the day in their favorite wood. Mr. and Mrs. Alger went out with the children in the morning, but having another engagement for the afternoon, they left their little boys with the company, to enjoy their after-dinner sports and return with them in the evening. Not long after they left, Willie found a beautiful butterfly which seemed, as it flitted to and fro before him, to be inviting him to follow. "Now, Jimmy,"

he says, "I think this little fairy is inviting us to go with and see her nice home. I guess she has a little fairy palace somewhere near that she would like to show to us poor city boys, who never were so far into the green wood before."

"I'd like to see a fairy house," said Jimmy; "let's chase her home, and ask her to show us all her pretty things."

On and on they ran after the butterfly, talking all the time of the wonders they should see when they found her

house, and never thinking how far they were straying from the place where they first found it. Bye-and-bye they grew weary and Jimmy said, "her house was too far off, he would rather see his own house, now, he was so tired. Willie was tired, too, and he thought they had better find their way back to the company again, so they turned round and ran back in the direction whence they came. They ran a long way, expecting every moment to catch a glimpse of the merry party they were seeking, but no trace

of them could they find. The sun was getting very low, and Willie remembered that the party were to leave the wood at sunset. Now, he began to think that they might have forgotten them, and would go home without them. This thought troubled him ; he would not mention it to Jimmy, but taking his hand he hurried him along as fast as he could. They soon lost the path they had been following, and got into the thick briers, the sun had gone down and it began to be quite dark in the deep woods. They were



very brave-hearted little boys, and had never been taught to fear darkness, so they kept up good courage and pressed on. Jimmy felt sure that the company must have left the wood, but he would not tell Willie his fears, hoping that they might soon find their way out alone.

The darkness increased, until they could no longer see which way to step, and Willie saw that there was no hope for them but to lie down and stay in the wood all night. Jimmy, by this time, was so very tired that he began to cry.

“Oh, Willie,” he says, “I can't go any farther, I am so tired.”

“Well, darling,” said Willie, “you need not. We can stay here and sleep under this big tree, if you will not be afraid.”

“And not see our mother to-night; oh, I can't I, can't.”

“Perhaps we will see her,” said Willie. “I guess they will come for us pretty soon, but we may have time to take a nice little nap, first.” He trembled as he spoke, for he knew that the hope was faint, but he tried to

keep up courage for his little brother's sake. He scraped together some dead leaves and made as good a bed as he could, talking all the time cheerfully to Jimmy, and trying to make him feel happy in this new strange home. "Now, Jimmy," he says, "You lie down, and I will hold your head in my lap and you can sleep till they come."

"Oh, Willie, I can't ; we can't stay here all night, alone."

"We are not alone, darling. God is here with us, and He will watch over

us just as tenderly as He does when we are at home in our own beds."

"How do you know He is here, Willie? I can't see Him."

"No, I know you can't see Him, but He is here. Don't you know mother said that He was everywhere."

"I know she did, but she never was out in the deep woods at night. May be she did 'nt know about this place. I wish we could see him if He is here."

"You may be sure He is here. There never was a place that God was

not. You can't see the wind, but you know that it is blowing all around you this moment."

"But I can hear the wind blow, and I cannot hear God any more than I can see Him."

"Yes, you can; but you can neither hear nor see the grass grow, and yet you know that it does grow. Now God's love is just like the air, always around us, though we can neither see nor hear it, we know it is with us because we could not live without it."

"Shall I ever see God?" "Not

with these eyes that you have now. They were not given you to see Him with, but you can feel His love every day, and know him more and more if you will try and be good."

By this time Jimmy had grown quite courageous. He curled down on his little leaf-bed and made himself ready for sleep.

"Don't you think, Willie," he says, "that mother is thinking of her little boys, now?"

"Yes, dear, and so is God thinking of us; we are His little boys and He

loves us more than mother or father or any body in this world. See, now he is sending His little star-watchers to look right into our eyes and say 'you are safe for God loves you.'"

"How can you know that He loves us more than mother; I think that she loves us all that she can,"

"So she does; but God *can* love us much more than she. Now you see, to-night we are lost away from mother, and all her love can't help us one bit; but God, we can't get lost away from, and His love will help us every mo-

ment, as long as we live, and that, you know, will be forever."

"Do you think He will send anybody to take us home to mother, again?"

"Yes, I hope so ; if He don't, He will take us home to heaven and take care of us there."

"I don't wan't to die now ; I am too little to go to heaven."

"No, you are not too little ; you would grow fast when you got there, and God wouldn't forget you, if you was ever so much smaller than you are



now. Heaven is his house, and the visitors that go there, are all just as welcome, whether they are big or little. I've] heard you sing in Sunday school,

‘ I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,  
A crown upon my forehead,  
A harp within my hand,’

and now, if God should take you to His home, you would get your wish; and oh, how happy you would always be.”

“ I begin to be sleepy, now,” says Jimmy. “ I'll say my prayers, and

then won't you sing me to sleep, so I shan't miss mother so much?"

"Why, says Willie, "the Katy-dids, a thousand of them are singing to you, now, but I will sing, too, if you want me to."

Then Jimmy repeated softly, as was his wont, the "Lord's prayer," and the prayer beginning, "Now I lay me down to sleep." His voice grew fainter and fainter as he got near the last of it, and he dropped away into a sound sleep.

Now, Willie was left all to his own

thoughts. He took off his coat and covered it tenderly over his little brother, to keep the dew from falling on him while he slept. His own eyes were wide open. He did not feel afraid, but there was something so strange in the thought of spending a night in the woods, so far from any of his friends, that it would not let him sleep. He remembered many things which his mother had told him, that good people need never feel afraid; that it is only when people are doing wrong that they have need to fear. Then he

tried to think whether he had been doing anything very wrong that need make him feel unhappy for fear of any harm. He had been in the habit of learning portions of the Bible to repeat to his mother, and now he found them a great comfort as he repeated them over to himself. Not long before he had committed the forty-sixth Psalm, which commences,

“ God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and

though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the trembling thereof."

This he was repeating very joyfully, feeling that every word was just what he needed, when suddenly there came a loud noise which echoed through the woods like thunder. It woke Jimmy, and coming as he did, out of a sweet sleep, it frightened him terribly. He cried, clinging to Willie,

"Oh, what is it? Where are we?"

“Keep still darling,” said Willie, “I don’t know what it is yet, but I am sure that nothing will harm us, for God is our watcher to-night.” Just at this moment the terrible noise came again, only nearer and louder than before. Immediately after it ceased, there came the sound of many voices calling, “Willie, Jimmy,” as loud as they could.

“Oh, here we are, here we are,” shouted Jimmy, for he knew that it was the voices of friends coming to carry them to their mother.

In a few moments more they were gathered in the strong arms of their father, whose joy knew no bounds at finding them safe from harm. The men who had come out to search for them, had brought a large gong from the village hotel, in order that the noise might reach a great way and warn the children that help was near. That was the noise which had frightened Jimmy, so.

They were soon carried to their mother whose joy no words can tell, at seeing her darlings alive once, more.

She in her pain and anxiety had imagined that some wild beast might have killed and devoured them, and that her fond eyes would never rest on them again.

Many thanks went up to the throne of God that night from the little household band, for restoring safely its lost ones to their anxious hearts. Mrs. Alger talked a long time with the children, and when she found how beautifully they had trusted God in their danger, she said, "it almost reconciled her to the pain she had felt



to know how well her lessons about God had filled the hearts of her children."

## THE MERCY OF GOD.



A little boy whose mother died when he was very young, and who had no earthly friends to care for him, wandered into many bad places, and learned many wicked habits. He had no one to tell him how wrong it was to take God's holy name in vain, and so, before he was old enough to know the meaning of the words he used, he

had the wicked habit of swearing. He learned to chew tobacco, and smoke cigars, and very soon he was led on to drink rum; then he became a great deal worse than he had ever been before. He had, naturally, a kind heart, and before he began to drink liquor, he never thought of taking anything that did not rightfully belong to him. He had never read the Bible, knew nothing of the commandment which says, "Thou shalt not steal," but something within him, said, "it is wrong to take that which is another's,"

and so for a long time he refrained, though he was often tempted. Sometimes he would be very hungry and have no money with which to get food ; but he had never permitted himself to steal, not even in those extreme cases of need. But one night, not very long after he began to drink, he stepped into one of those low places where people are poisoned with vile liquors, and asked for a glass of rum. There were several wicked-looking men standing by, and as soon as he asked for the rum, they looked at one an-

other, as much as to say, "that's just the boy we want." Hiram, (this was the boy's name), drained his glass, and looked into the bottom of it as if he wished it had been a great way farther off. Then set it down on the counter, and turned to leave the room. One of the men accosted him with, "What's your hurry, young friend, why not take another glass?"

"Because I have no more money," said Hiram.

"Well, I have plenty ; come, stay and drink with me."

Hiram was easily persuaded, for he had learned to love rum, and one taste of it always made him want more.

He stayed, and these wicked men gave him liquor until he was no longer in his right mind. Then they took him down the street, and kept him in a room where they were accustomed to meet, to lay their wicked plans, until near twelve o'clock, when all was still out of doors. Then they persuaded him to climb into the window of a jeweller's store and unfasten the door, that they might enter. Just as he was

taking out the large bolt, a police-man came, and the men who were still outside, fled ; but poor Hiram was taken and carried to the watch-house, and the next morning to the jail, where he lay many weeks awaiting his trial. Now, for the first time in his life, he was led to think what a wicked life he had been leading. There was preaching every Sunday at the jail, and, of course, when the minister came, the Bible was read.

| The minister always preached about hell, and his sermons were full of

threatenings, and some way Hiram often went away to his cell feeling more wicked than before. But the Bible-reading was a great help to him. He learned from that, that the dear God "has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. He listened to the exhortations of that good book which says, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will you die. And again he heard that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."



One day a stranger came to preach for the prisoners, and he took for his text these passages: "And there is no God else, beside me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." "But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsakest them not."

His sermon was an entreaty to the prisoners to love God and obey Him, showing his tender mercy towards

them ; that though they were sinners, they might turn to God and be forgiven, and become his own dear children. He told them that God was a just God, that he would surely recompense them for every deed, but at the same time he would never punish them more than they deserved. This sermon let a flood of light into the mind of poor Hiram. He looked over his past life, and seeing, as he did, how many bad influences he had been subjected to, and how few good ones, he said to himself, surely if there is a

just and merciful God, he will not punish me forever, for what I have done. I thought, when I was told that I should go to hell, that I might as well continue to be a bad, wicked boy, but as God loves me and won't punish me for any more than I have done, I will try and love him and be good all the rest of my life.

He asked the jailor to let him take a Bible, which he very readily consented to do, and the little lost boy, read and studied it, and was saved.

When his trial came on, he was









